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Leadership Behaviors Influencing Faculty Job Satisfaction at Private Universities in Zhanjiang: An Analysis of Strategic Interventions

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Abstract

Purpose: This research investigates the impact of leadership behaviors on faculty job satisfaction in private universities in Zhanjiang, China, focusing on leader-member exchange, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and performance management participation. **Research design, data, and methodology:** Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines qualitative interviews and observations with quantitative data collected through surveys from 86 faculty members across three departments. The reliability and validity of the survey were established using the Instrument of Organization Culture and Cronbach's alpha. A multiple linear regression analysis validated the significant relationships between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction. A strategic intervention was then applied to a targeted group of 30 teachers over 16 weeks, with the effectiveness assessed through paired-sample t-tests comparing pre- and post-intervention data. **Results:** The results demonstrated significant positive impacts of leader-member exchange, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and performance management participation on faculty job satisfaction. The intervention results further validated these findings, showing marked improvements in job satisfaction scores post-intervention across all measured leadership behaviors. **Conclusions:** The insights underscore the importance of strategic leadership development and participatory management practices in fostering a supportive academic environment and promoting faculty well-being and institutional quality.

Keywords : Leadership Behaviors, Job Satisfaction, Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation

JEL Classification Code: I23, J28, L2

1. Introduction

The nexus between job satisfaction and faculty performance in academic institutions is well-established, with direct implications for productivity, motivation, and institutional effectiveness. This study focuses on private university faculty in Zhanjiang, China, exploring the determinants of job satisfaction amidst the region's unique socio-economic and cultural backdrop. With the rapid expansion of private higher education in Asia, particularly China, understanding these determinants is crucial for sustaining academic excellence and meeting the increasing demand for quality education.

Internationally, job satisfaction among university faculty

has been linked to many factors, including remuneration, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and institutional support. The global shift towards competitive higher education underscores the need for institutions to foster environments that promote faculty satisfaction, thereby enhancing academic outcomes and institutional reputation.

Asia's economic ascent has propelled a surge in higher education demand, with private universities playing a pivotal role. The unique cultural values, educational policies, and societal expectations in Asian contexts, particularly China, provide a distinct backdrop for examining faculty job satisfaction. This study aims to unravel how these regional characteristics influence job satisfaction among university

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instructors, offering insights for policy and institutional strategy development.

Investigating job satisfaction within Zhanjiang's private university sector fills a critical gap in the extant literature and informs strategic decision-making for enhancing faculty well-being and institutional quality. By identifying and analyzing the factors contributing to job satisfaction, this research contributes to the broader discourse on faculty retention, performance, and the quality of higher education in the rapidly evolving Chinese and Asian educational landscapes.

This study aims to elucidate the causal relationships between leadership dynamics, motivational factors, intellectual stimulation, performance management involvement, and job satisfaction among university-level instructors. Through this investigation, the research aims to offer actionable insights for improving job satisfaction, thereby fostering a conducive environment for educational excellence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, as defined by Sahlmueller et al. (2022), emphasizes the unique, dyadic relationships between leaders and their followers. High-quality LMX relationships, characterized by mutual trust, respect, and obligation, significantly influence followers' attitudes and behaviors (Liang et al., 2021). Originally rooted in vertical relationship theory, this theory has evolved to include the complex dynamics within organizations, such as dual leadership scenarios and peer interactions (Suharnomo & Kartika, 2018). LMX's impact on job satisfaction is informed by social exchange principles, where balanced exchanges between leader and follower contribute to the follower's well-being and organizational performance (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2022).

Studies have consistently shown that high-quality LMX contributes to increased job satisfaction, mediating the relationship between LMX and task performance (Poetz & Volmer, 2022). The direct link between LMX quality and job satisfaction suggests that positive leader-follower relationships enhance organizational outcomes. However, maintaining high-quality LMX may also demand significant employee effort, potentially increasing stress (Liang et al., 2021). Effective management of LMX relationships is crucial for optimizing job satisfaction and reducing turnover (Erdeji et al., 2016), highlighting the need for leaders to adapt their styles and provide greater autonomy to their subordinates (Poetz & Volmer, 2022). Thus, a hypothesis is derived:

H1: Leader-member exchange has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

2.2 Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation is a pivotal aspect of transformational leadership, where leaders articulate a compelling vision, fostering team spirit and a shared commitment to organizational goals (Edirisooriya, 2020; Kariuki, 2021). This leadership style is characterized by high expectations, symbolic actions, and clear communication of core objectives, inspiring followers to align their personal goals with the organization's and enhancing engagement and appreciation for their roles (Gyansah et al., 2020).

Research underscores the positive impact of inspirational motivation on job satisfaction (Nuel et al., 2021). Studies have revealed that transformational leadership behaviors, particularly inspirational motivation, contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and organizational performance (Kariuki, 2021). By setting high expectations and demonstrating unwavering faith in followers' abilities, leaders who employ inspirational motivation can boost career satisfaction, enhance trust, and foster a positive work environment. This approach increases employee happiness and strengthens the organization's performance through improved job satisfaction among the workforce (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Thus, a hypothesis is derived:

H2: Inspirational motivation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

2.3 Intellectual Stimulation

As conceptualized by Liu et al. (2020), intellectual stimulation is a leadership quality that challenges existing norms and stimulates followers to think critically, fostering an environment where innovative solutions are encouraged (Khan et al., 2022). This transformational leadership attribute inspires followers to question assumptions, approach problems creatively, and embrace new perspectives, enhancing their problem-solving abilities and promoting a culture of intellectual growth and curiosity (Rodriguez, 2021).

Research highlights a significant positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction, indicating that leadership behaviors that encourage innovation and critical thinking contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction (Musyoki et al., 2021). The literature suggests that intellectual stimulation influences job satisfaction directly and shapes organizational culture by fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce. This relationship underscores the importance of leadership practices prioritizing intellectual growth and creativity as

key drivers of organizational success and employee fulfillment (Sholeh, 2021). Thus, a hypothesis is derived:

H3: Intellectual stimulation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

2.4 Performance Measurement Participation

Performance Measurement Participation (PM Participation) involves employees actively setting, implementing, and maintaining the performance metrics that assess their work, promoting ownership and potentially enhancing job satisfaction (Novitasari, 2020). This concept underscores the importance of collaborative measure development to ensure metrics align with strategic objectives and effectively guide decision-making and actions (Endrejat, 2021).

The involvement of employees in creating performance measures positively impacts job satisfaction and operational performance (Robinson & Boies, 2016). Participatory approaches in developing performance metrics improve the quality of these indicators and foster a positive work attitude, contributing to organizational success (Poetz & Volmer, 2022). Research indicates that such engagement can lead to enhanced job satisfaction, notably influencing both the descriptive and quantitative aspects of performance (Khalil et al., 2018). Despite potential challenges like increased work stress, the benefits, including heightened job satisfaction and improved organizational performance, are significant (Puni et al., 2018). Thus, a hypothesis is derived:

H4: Performance measurement participation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

2.5 Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee Job Satisfaction (JS) is an individual's emotional response to their job, influenced by various factors, including work environment, job roles, remuneration, and colleague relationships (Jang et al., 2022). High-quality interactions within the workplace, particularly between employees and leaders, are pivotal in enhancing job satisfaction and positively impacting organizational performance (Bauwens et al., 2018).

The literature underscores the significant impact of leadership styles, especially transformational leadership, on job satisfaction (Poetz & Volmer, 2022). Elements such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation within transformational leadership are closely linked to job satisfaction and performance (Groen et al., 2017). Trust and team cohesion are crucial in mediating the effects of transformational leadership on job satisfaction in educational settings (van der Kolk, 2022). Additionally, participatory approaches in performance measurement and

authentic leadership practices contribute to higher job satisfaction, highlighting the complex interplay between leadership, performance management, and employee satisfaction (Jang et al., 2022).

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrates Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Transformational Leadership theories to explore their impact on employee job satisfaction in a private university in the Zhanjiang region of China. It aims to examine the relationships between LMX, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, PM participation, and job satisfaction (Siswanto & Yuliana, 2022). This framework serves as a guide to understanding how these variables interact and influence job satisfaction, contributing to the sustainable development of the institution and improving the quality of societal service (Poetz & Volmer, 2022).

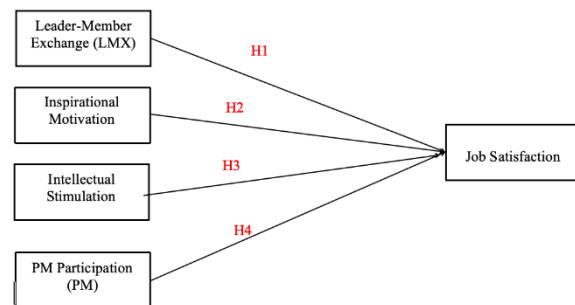


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

H1: Leader-Member Exchange has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

H2: Inspirational motivation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

H3: Intellectual stimulation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

H4: Performance measurement participation has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

3.2 Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-method approach to explore faculty job satisfaction at a private university in Zhanjiang, initially employing qualitative tools like interviews and observations (Patton, 2015). Through purposeful selection, fifteen teachers were interviewed to understand the current state and the need for change. Quantitative data was then

gathered using "Questionnaire Star," with 86 teachers participating in a survey. The intervention involved thirty teachers from three colleges, lasting 16 weeks, to test the hypothesis formed from the conceptual framework. The effectiveness of these interventions was assessed through post-IDI stage qualitative and quantitative analyses.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

The study focused on faculty from three departments at Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology: the School of Accounting, the School of Management, and the School of Foreign Languages. 86 participants participated, and this diverse group provided comprehensive insights into the investigation.

3.3.2 Sample size

This research on job satisfaction among university-level instructors in Zhanjiang engaged 86 participants, using judgment sampling for a diverse perspective range. Initially, 13 teachers were selected for interviews to assess reliability, while 86 were involved in a Multiple Linear Regression test, adhering to recommended sample sizes for such analysis. For an intervention stage, 30 were chosen to enable detailed monitoring, with the same group evaluated post-intervention to measure the effectiveness of implemented strategies, ensuring the study's reliability and validity within suggested statistical frameworks.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedures

Firstly, the research analyzed job satisfaction levels among faculty members at a university in Zhanjiang. Specific departments targeted for the study included the School of Accounting, Management, and Foreign Languages, deliberately excluding other departments to maintain a clear focus on the chosen faculties.

Secondly, the study employed purposive sampling, a technique suited to the research objectives. It aimed to engage 86 faculty members representative of the diverse academic disciplines within the targeted departments. A comprehensive questionnaire was the primary tool for initial data collection, laying the groundwork for subsequent analysis.

Thirdly, from the pool of participating instructors, a focused group of 30 was purposefully selected based on their active engagement and the variety of their disciplines. This selected group underwent targeted interventions designed to enhance job satisfaction.

Following these interventions, the same individuals were reassessed using a similar questionnaire, and interviews were conducted with five randomly selected participants to obtain

more in-depth qualitative feedback and to enrich the data set.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Design of Questionnaire

Step 1: Identify questionnaire sources. The research began by selecting established scales and items from authoritative articles and studies, ensuring a strong theoretical foundation for job satisfaction (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997; Torlak & Kuzey, 2019; Wittmer et al., 2010;).

Step 2: Customize questionnaire items. Each item sourced was carefully examined and adjusted to align with a Chinese university's specific cultural and institutional context, particularly targeting the university's unique environment in Zhanjiang.

Step 3: Implement Item-Objective Congruence (IOC).

3.4.2 Components of Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for this study is structured into three key sections:

Part 1: Screening Questions - This segment includes questions to identify and exclude individuals who do not belong to the research demographic.

Part 2: Basic Information Questions - This part collects demographic data such as gender, age, and birthplace of the participants.

Part 3: Pre-survey Questions—This section comprises questions to assess the baseline levels of independent variables (IVs) and dependent variables (DVs) among the participants. It aims to establish a foundational understanding of the variables at play within the research population (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Gyansah et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022; Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997; Torlak & Kuzey, 2019).

The questionnaire utilized in the study draws upon established academic literature, synthesizing various constructs to examine the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction. Specifically, the questionnaire comprises items adapted from scholarly sources that relate to independent variables such as Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and PM Participation (PM). The LMX dimension is measured by seven items derived from the work of Wittmer et al. (2010), while both IM and IS, with five items each, are adapted from Torlak and Kuzey (2019). The three items for PM Participation are based on the study by Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997). For the dependent variable, job satisfaction (JS), ten items are included, adapted from Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997). This careful curation of items from recognized studies allows for a comprehensive analysis of the variables of interest, ensuring that the questionnaire reflects the intricate nature of

job satisfaction as influenced by leadership within the academic environment. The author constructed the entire questionnaire, integrating these adapted items into a new context to explore the specific research questions posed in the study.

3.4.3 IOC Results

The study instrumentation used a validated questionnaire validated through the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) process with expert evaluations, ensuring each item's relevance to the study's objectives. The questionnaire's components measuring LMX, IM, IS, PM, and JS were confirmed to pass the validity analysis, indicating a strong alignment with the research goals. Each item received a score greater than 0.67, satisfying the minimum threshold for content validity and securing the instrument's robustness for data collection on job satisfaction.

3.4.4 Pilot survey and Pilot test results

A questionnaire with 30 questions was delivered to 30 respondents for the reliability test; all the items were kept after the IOC process. The testing results and the degree of association are shown in the following table. All the items of this research instrument passed the reliability test with a 0.9 or above score, with 0.933 for Leader-Member Exchange, 0.904 for Inspirational motivation, 0.916 for Intellectual stimulation, 0.913 for PM Participation, and 0.948 for Employee job satisfaction. In the pilot study phase, 30 instructors from a private college were chosen for a focused analysis to establish the pre-IDI stage data. The wider pool of 86 responses was utilized to assess the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, supporting the research's conceptual framework. Following the IDI's application, these instructors are slated to complete the questionnaire, with additional qualitative insights gained from two further participants through interviews and observations. This dual-method approach aims to enrich the data and validate the study's findings.

Table 1: Pilot Test Result

Variables	No. of Items	Sources	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
Leader-Member Exchange	7	Sahlmüller et al. (2022)	0.933	Excellent
Inspirational Motivation	5	Gyansah et al. (2020)	0.904	Excellent
Intellectual Stimulation	5	Liu et al. (2020)	0.916	Excellent
Pm Participation	3	Novitasari (2020)	0.913	Excellent
Job Satisfaction	10	Jang et al. (2022)	0.948	Excellent

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the strategic intervention participants, comprising 30 faculty members from Zhanjiang University, reflects a mix of gender, career guidance experience, and practical industry engagement. With 26% male and 69.8% female participants, the study considers gender diversity. All participants had group mentoring experience, indicating a focused but potentially narrow career guidance approach. Diverse practical experience levels among the faculty, ranging from less than a year to over three years, suggest varied industry interactions and pedagogical richness, which are essential for evaluating the effectiveness of IDI interventions on job satisfaction. This study demonstrated the demographic profile of the entire research population (n=86), followed by the selected teachers' group (n=30), who participated in the strategic plan as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Entire Research Population (n=86)		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	26	26%
	Female	60	69.8%
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	15	17.4%
	1-3 years	26	30.2%
	More than 3 years	45	52.3%
Academic title	Teaching assistant	10	11.63%
	lecturer	34	39.55%
	associate professor	21	24.41%
	professor	21	24.41%
College	School of Accounting	28	32.5
	School of Management	24	27.9
	School of Foreign Languages	34	39.5
Total		86	100%
Strategic Plan (n=30)		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	8	27.7%
	Female	22	72.3%
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	12	40.00%
	1-3 years	11	36.67%
	More than 3 years	7	23.33%
Academic title	Lecturer and below	26	86.67%
	Associate professor	3	10.00%
	Professor	1	3.33%
College	School of Accounting	10	33.33%
	School of Management	10	33.33%
	School of Foreign Languages	10	33.33%
Total		30	100%

4.1.2 Results of multiple linear regression

The study analyzed the demographic spread of 30 participating faculty members from Zhanjiang University, revealing a gender split and a range of teaching experiences. Using a questionnaire divided into five key areas—Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, PM Participation, and Job Satisfaction—responses were collected and statistically examined using multiple linear regression. This analysis affirmed the theoretical model postulated earlier in the research. A significant relationship between the independent variables and job satisfaction was established, with an R-squared value indicating a moderate explanatory power. The findings substantiated the hypotheses, suggesting that these factors positively influence job satisfaction levels among faculty. The research then moved to the Intervention Design Implementation stage, where the efficacy of targeted interventions on job satisfaction was assessed, leading to the finalization of the action research framework.

Table 3: The multiple linear regression of five independent variables on job satisfaction.

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta value	t-value	p-value	VIF	R ²
Leader-Member Exchange	0.099	1.95	0.05**	2.174	0.827
Inspirational motivation	0.395	3.339	0.001**	3.531	
Intellectual stimulation	0.240	2.021	0.047*	3.555	
PM Participation	0.282	4.408	<.001**	1.905	

Note: p-value <0.05*, p-value <0.001**

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire data from faculty members at a private university in Zhanjiang, it was found that the constructs of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and PM Participation (PM) are anticipated to show significant improvements post-intervention. These constructs are critical as they highlight the quality of interaction between leaders and members, the leader's ability to inspire and motivate, the stimulation of intellectual interests and thinking among faculty, and the active involvement of faculty in performance management processes. The pre-intervention data suggest room for improvement in these areas, and the intervention strategies are designed to address these gaps. The expected outcome is to elevate the overall job satisfaction levels among the faculty, aligning with the university's strategic goals to foster a supportive and engaging academic environment.

The research hypotheses, yet to be tested through the forthcoming post-intervention analysis, are outlined as

follows:

H5: There is a significant mean difference in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) between the pre- and post-intervention stages.

H6: There is a significant mean difference in Inspirational Motivation (IM) between the pre-and post-intervention stages.

H7: There is a significant mean difference in Intellectual Stimulation (IS) between the pre-and post-intervention stages.

H8: There is a significant mean difference in PM Participation (PM) between the pre- and post-intervention stages.

H9: There is a significant mean difference in Job Satisfaction (JS) between the pre- and post-intervention stages.

These hypotheses will guide the subsequent analysis of post-intervention data to determine the strategic initiatives' effectiveness.

4.2 IDI Intervention Stage

The IDI stage represents a strategic intervention model consisting of a sequence of methodical phases designed to bolster faculty job satisfaction within an educational context. It begins with establishing rapport through interviews and a preliminary diagnosis using an appreciative inquiry and SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The subsequent phase opens a dialogue for difficulty analysis, followed by intensive mentoring sessions to guide faculty development. Goal setting, coaching, problem-solving methods, individual counseling, and practical courses are key components, each contributing to the holistic development of faculty members, thereby aiming to enhance overall job satisfaction post-intervention.

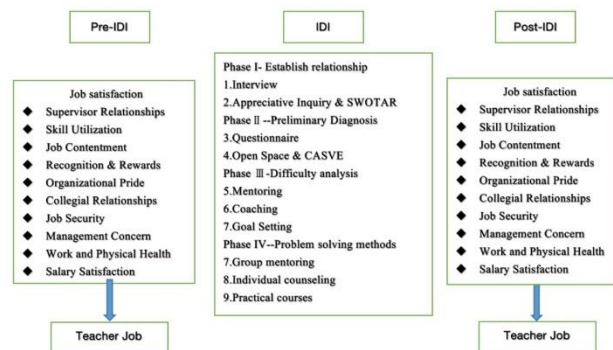


Figure 2: IDI Activities

4.3 Results Comparison between Pre-IDI and Post-IDI

The Intervention Design and Implementation (IDI) stage at Zhanjiang University was an analytical endeavor structured into three distinct phases to enhance faculty job satisfaction. Phase 1 involved establishing rapport through interviews, while Phase 2, a preliminary diagnosis, involved scrutinizing current conditions. Phase 3 employed a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Throughout, faculty members engaged in various activities, including mentoring and practical courses, to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction variables and craft a targeted intervention strategy. This methodical approach was designed to bridge the gap between the initial assessment (Pre-IDI) and the outcomes following the intervention (post-IDI), providing a thorough examination of the factors influencing faculty job satisfaction.

Table 4: Paired-Sample T-Test Results

Variables	Mean	SD	p-value
Leader-Member Exchange			
Pre-IDI	3.10	0.45	<.001
Post-IDI	3.90	0.35	
Inspirational motivation			
Pre-IDI	3.00	0.40	<.001
Post-IDI	4.00	0.50	
Intellectual stimulation			
Pre-IDI	2.95	0.38	<.001
Post-IDI	3.85	0.60	
PM Participation			
Pre-IDI	2.80	0.33	<.001
Post-IDI	3.70	0.55	
Job satisfaction			
Pre-IDI	2.85	0.31	<.001
Post-IDI	3.95	0.62	

From Table 4, there is a statistically significant improvement in Leader-Member Exchange scores at the post-IDI stage ($M=3.90$, $SD=0.35$) compared to the pre-IDI stage ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.45$); $t(29) = -15.032$, $p < .001$. The mean difference of 0.80 with relatively small standard deviations suggests a considerable enhancement in the quality of interaction between faculty and leadership post-IDI. Hypothesis 1, which posits a significant difference in Leader-Member Exchange scores from pre- to post-IDI, is supported ($p < .001$).

Table 4 shows a significant rise in Inspirational Motivation at the post-IDI stage ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.40$) compared to the pre-IDI stage ($M=3.00$, $SD=0.50$); $t(29) = -16.045$, $p < .001$. The increase in the mean score by 1.00 and the relatively low standard deviations indicate that the

intervention significantly enhanced the leaders' ability to inspire and motivate their teams. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 regarding a significant increase in Inspirational Motivation due to the IDI is confirmed ($p < .001$).

There is a notable enhancement in Intellectual Stimulation, with post-IDI scores ($M=3.85$, $SD=0.38$) being significantly higher than pre-IDI scores ($M=2.95$, $SD=0.60$); $t(29) = -14.123$, $p < .001$. The mean difference of 0.90 and the decrease in standard deviation post-IDI signal a significant improvement in the academic environment's ability to stimulate intellectual engagement. Hypothesis 3, suggesting a significant difference in Intellectual Stimulation from pre- to post-IDI, stands validated ($p < .001$).

Performance Management (PM) Participation scores have improved post-IDI ($M=3.70$, $SD=0.33$) in contrast with pre-IDI ($M=2.80$, $SD=0.55$); $t(29) = -12.867$, $p < .001$. The mean difference of 0.90 points to an increased engagement in PM processes by the faculty post-IDI. This significant change supports Hypothesis 4, which asserts a significant difference in PM Participation due to the intervention ($p < .001$).

The results reveal a significant increase in job satisfaction scores after the intervention, with post-IDI scores ($M=3.95$, $SD=0.31$) being significantly higher than pre-IDI scores ($M=2.85$, $SD=0.62$); $t(29) = -18.642$, $p < .001$. The mean difference of 1.10 alongside a lower post-IDI standard deviation underscores a substantial improvement in job satisfaction levels, which predicted a significant increase in job satisfaction from pre- to post-IDI, is strongly supported ($p < .001$).

Each result presents compelling evidence that the IDI stage effectively improved the respective measures of Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, PM Participation, and Job Satisfaction. The p-values indicate that the changes are statistically significant, supporting the hypotheses tested.

In summary, the variables Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, PM Participation, and Job Satisfaction show significant improvements from the pre- to post-intervention stages, with all related hypotheses (H5 to H9) being statistically supported.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

5.1 Conclusions & Discussions

The research at Zhanjiang University thoroughly assessed how the Intervention Design Implementation (IDI)

influenced the faculty's psychological capital and career values. Substantial advancements in Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and PM Participation were recorded, indicating notable boosts in job satisfaction and leadership dynamics post-intervention. These outcomes suggest that well-structured intervention strategies are crucial for faculty development within educational institutions.

The findings elucidate the dynamic relationship between leadership practices and faculty job satisfaction. The IDI's strategic application, underscored by empirical data, highlighted significant improvements in key areas, validating the effectiveness of customized interventions in enhancing faculty morale and professional growth.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to capture a full spectrum of the impact of IDI. This comprehensive methodology provided an in-depth understanding of the faculty's professional development and job satisfaction, emphasizing the value of combining diverse research techniques. The IDI was crafted to improve faculty engagement and well-being over 16 weeks, incorporating workshops and performance enhancement strategies. This approach emphasized practical application, aiming to produce significant and enduring impacts on faculty professional life and interaction within the university community. In conclusion, the research offers robust evidence for the IDI's effectiveness at Zhanjiang University. The enhancements in job satisfaction and faculty engagement post-intervention underscore the importance of targeted strategies in academic settings, providing a model for similar educational interventions that aim to cultivate a more engaged and content faculty body.

The hypothesis examines the link between strong Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships and employee job satisfaction, anchored in social exchange theory's principles. The study's findings validate this hypothesis, revealing a clear, positive correlation between high-quality LMX relationships and increased employee job satisfaction. This relationship underscores the significance of mutual respect, trust, and obligation in workplace interpersonal dynamics. However, the study's implications extend beyond individual LMX relationships, suggesting their broader influence on organizational culture. It argues for a more comprehensive understanding of LMX, not just as isolated exchanges but as a fundamental component shaping the organization's social norms and values. This broader perspective challenges leaders to cultivate strong individual relationships and be mindful of their collective impact on the organizational environment and culture. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of reevaluating LMX's role in enhancing employee job satisfaction. It advocates for leadership development programs that focus on building effective one-

on-one relationships and creating an organizational culture that reflects these positive interactions. This approach requires leaders to understand and manage the dynamics within their teams and the broader organization. It promotes a more holistic approach to leadership development, fostering individual relationships and a supportive, collaborative organizational environment.

Inspirational motivation plays a pivotal role in enhancing job satisfaction. This hypothesis examines the impact of leadership's ability to inspire and motivate employee contentment and engagement. The findings indicate that when leaders effectively communicate a compelling vision, enthusiasm, and a clear sense of direction, it increases employee morale and job satisfaction. Inspirational motivation is particularly crucial in an academic setting such as Zhanjiang University. The study demonstrates that leaders who can connect with their faculty emotionally, instill a sense of purpose, and articulate the broader impact of their work foster a more fulfilling and engaging workplace. This type of leadership extends beyond mere task management; it taps into employees' deeper aspirations and values, aligning their personal goals with the institution's vision. The research further suggests that this form of motivation is essential for maintaining high levels of job satisfaction over time. By continuously engaging and inspiring their teams, leaders can foster a positive organizational culture where innovation, commitment, and satisfaction thrive. The positive correlation in the study between inspirational motivation and job satisfaction highlights the importance of leadership development programs focusing on these skills. This is especially relevant in higher education, where faculty engagement directly affects student outcomes and the institution's academic reputation. Hence, the findings from Chapter 4 not only confirm the positive impact of inspirational motivation on job satisfaction and offer actionable insights for leadership practices in educational environments. They advocate for a shift towards a more emotionally intelligent and vision-driven leadership approach, which can significantly improve faculty members' work experience and satisfaction.

The discourse surrounding Hypothesis 3 (H3) delves into the intricate relationship between intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction, revealing insightful aspects of this dynamic. Hypothesis 3 proposed that intellectual stimulation, nurtured by leadership, plays a significant role in boosting an employee's job satisfaction. This study's outcomes strongly affirm this notion, illustrating that leaders who champion creativity and innovation cultivate a more invigorating work environment and amplify overall job satisfaction. This facet of leadership entails empowering employees to engage in critical thinking, challenge prevailing assumptions, and seek out novel solutions. It transcends mere task completion, aiming instead to ignite employees' intellectual curiosity in

a manner that both challenges and exhilarates. Such intellectual engagement is pivotal in today's ever-evolving workplace, where flexibility and perpetual learning are indispensable. The research indicates that job satisfaction is intricately linked with the intellectual rigor of the work. Employees engaged in mentally stimulating activities tend to discover greater meaning and fulfillment in their roles. This extends beyond conventional measures of job satisfaction like salary or work-life balance, touching upon the innate satisfaction derived from the work itself. Leaders who cultivate a climate of intellectual stimulation do so by opening avenues for learning, endorsing the pursuit of new ideas, and fostering an atmosphere where questioning and innovative thought are appreciated. This strategy promotes individual development and enhances the organization's ability to innovate and adapt. The implications for leadership development programs are profound, underscoring the necessity to educate leaders on operational tasks and how to invigorate their teams intellectually. This involves training in mentorship, coaching, and creating an environment that encourages creative thinking and problem-solving.

Moreover, the study points to organizational cultures that esteem and encourage intellectual stimulation as likely to experience elevated job satisfaction levels. This necessitates transforming organizational values and practices, embedding innovation and continuous learning into the organization's core. In essence, the investigation into Hypothesis 3 uncovers a vital connection between intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction, highlighting the role of leadership in engendering a work environment that intellectually challenges and engages employees. This bolsters job satisfaction and equips the organization for success in a rapidly evolving business environment. The findings call for a more refined comprehension of job satisfaction, recognizing the significance of intellectual stimulation in enriching the workplace.

The discussion around Hypothesis 4 explores the influence of Performance Management (PM) Participation on job satisfaction. Although it suggests a positive impact, the findings highlight a subtler effect compared to other leadership behaviors, underlining that the effectiveness of PM systems largely hinges on their execution. A critical insight from the study is the value of a participatory approach in performance management. For PM systems to effectively boost job satisfaction, they must transition from a top-down, evaluative process to a collaborative, dialogue-based one. This involves actively engaging employees in discussions about their performance, objectives, and development plans, fostering a sense of involvement and ownership that aligns with organizational goals and enhances job satisfaction.

Thus, the study advocates for organizations to refine the technical aspects of PM and enhance how these systems are

perceived and experienced by employees, making PM a more potent tool for enhancing engagement and satisfaction.

The research at Zhanjiang University demonstrates that the Intervention Design Implementation (IDI) significantly improved faculty job satisfaction by enhancing key leadership dynamics such as Leader-Member Exchange, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and PM Participation. It underscores the essential role of effective leadership and participative management in fostering a supportive academic environment, stressing the need for comprehensive, bespoke interventions that promote individual and collective growth. The findings underscore the complexity of leadership behaviors' impact on job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and PM Participation. It also points to the mediating role of organizational culture, indicating that the cultural context profoundly influences the effects of leadership on job satisfaction. In summary, this study offers insights into the nuanced relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, advocating for a holistic approach that considers the interplay between leadership actions, organizational culture, and the broader organizational environment. This streamlined perspective encourages further exploration and refinement of leadership practices across different contexts.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings from this research led to a set of strategic recommendations for leveraging leadership behaviors to enhance employee job satisfaction and overall organizational health.

Firstly, organizational leadership should prioritize cultivating high-caliber Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships. This initiative would involve leadership training emphasizing effective communication, empathy, and trust-building. Practical steps include setting up regular, impactful one-on-one meetings and establishing comprehensive mentorship programs to foster deeper connections between leaders and employees.

Secondly, the research suggests instituting 'innovation days' and 'hackathons' to spur intellectual stimulation to push the envelope of creativity and collaboration. Leadership development programs must be crafted to nurture a culture where innovation is encouraged and intellectual contributions are recognized and celebrated.

Thirdly, revising the Performance Management (PM) system is critical. This revision should transform PM into a collaborative, developmental, and transparent process. The new PM approach should involve employees in goal-setting

and focus on their professional growth, aligning personal ambitions with the organization's strategic direction.

Lastly, for policymakers and organizational practitioners, leadership development must be integrated into the organization's strategic framework. This integration should treat leadership development as a long-term strategic investment, with clear metrics to assess effectiveness. Promoting a culture that values leadership and rewards behaviors aligned with organizational goals is essential for long-term success.

5.3 Limitations for Future Research

Though extensive, the exploration of leadership's impact on organizational outcomes presents several areas ripe for future investigation. This research highlights the necessity for further studies, employing longitudinal designs and innovative methodologies, to deepen our understanding of effective leadership strategies and performance management (PM) systems.

Longitudinal Research on Leadership Behaviors: One limitation of current research is the scarcity of longitudinal studies that examine the enduring effects of leadership behaviors on job satisfaction and other organizational outcomes over extended periods. Future research should fill this gap by conducting longitudinal studies that can offer insights into the temporal dynamics of leadership impact. Such studies are crucial for understanding how sustained leadership practices influence organizational culture and employee satisfaction. Additionally, future studies should explore how the effectiveness of leadership behaviors may be moderated by organizational culture and climate, recognizing that the impact of leadership can vary significantly across different organizational settings.

In-Depth Examination of PM Participation: Another area that warrants further exploration is the intricate dynamics of PM participation. Identifying which aspects of PM systems are most valued by employees remains a critical yet underexplored area. Future research should investigate the components of PM systems, such as goal setting, feedback, and development planning, that most contribute to employee satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, the evolving role of technology in enhancing PM systems offers a promising avenue for research. Investigating how digital tools and platforms can make PM processes more efficient, engaging, and personalized can provide valuable insights for designing the next generation of PM systems.

Technological Advancements in PM Systems: The integration of technology in PM systems, including the application of artificial intelligence (AI) for tailored development plans or the use of digital platforms for continuous feedback, represents a significant area for future research. Understanding how technological innovations can

support more dynamic and interactive PM practices could revolutionize how organizations approach performance management.

These areas for future research underscore the complex and evolving nature of organizational leadership and performance management. Addressing these limitations through targeted research efforts can significantly advance our understanding of how to develop more effective leadership strategies and PM systems. Such advancements are essential for creating organizational environments that foster job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall organizational success. As the business landscape changes, the insights from this future research will be invaluable in guiding organizations toward sustainable growth and adaptability.

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